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Honorable Albert C. Hall
Assistant Secretary of Defense
   (Intelligence)
Room 3E282 - Pentagon
Washington, D. C. 20301

Dear Al,

     This is the paper I mentioned at our lunch. We sent this in
to Bill as a first step in addressing the intelligence handling fragmenta-
tion problem.

     This version is strictly a draft currently in staffing. Your views
would be most helpful. I also mentioned to Danny the possibility of
someone like Ahern getting involved.

                   Sincerely,

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Enclosure
  As stated -

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8 February 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT   :   Coping with the Intelligence Information
                     Handling Problem

1.   There currently exists within the Intelligence Community a melange of concepts, proposals and uncoordinated actions concerning various aspects of the problem of intelligence information handling -- the dissemination and display of collected and processed data -- which converge into a very major, general issue calling for immediate action.

2.   Currently involved in this situation are:

--   At least ten programs are developing separate
     electronic CRT display systems, involving different
     sensor systems and reporting at varying security
     levels.   No overall coordination plan exists.

--   Efforts to improve or replace COINS.

--   Efforts to improve warning and crisis intelligence
     support systems.

--   Efforts to improve the national-tactical intelligence
     interface, which will have to interrelate with the
     worldwide information handling systems of the mili-
     tary command and control system.

--   Study activities to define the impact on users of
      upcoming major collection system sensor inputs, and
      to identify user needs and operating procedures as
      they affect the layout of communication nets and
      terminal equipment for users.

--   Problems of dissemination to deployed commands of
      information becoming available through decompart-
      mentation of certain TK materials.

3.   In one way or another, all of these efforts deal with
the central nervous system of the US intelligence effort -- and there
is serious danger in attempting to deal with them on a piecemeal basis.
Unless they are integrated and pull together, the Community will be
confronted with technical confusion delays, unnecessary costs of
sizeable magnitude and systems that serve only segments of the con-
sumer world.

4.   The problem is particularly acute in the developmental
electronic information systems. If the many efforts now underway are
brought to fruition, the Intelligence Community will be operating numerous
separate, secure "real-time" video exchange systems in a few years.
Modern computer and electronic display technology, if not applied on
a coordinated Community-wide basis, could result in an extensive waste
of resources and actually deter efficient and effective operations.

5.   The systems have several features in common, but they also
have many features which distinguish one from the other. Each system
is being designed primarily to display a particular intelligence input
or group of related inputs. Each system will have its own file structure,
retrieval language and data base management system. Access will be
made more difficult by reason of the large variety of classifications and
categories. The intelligence analyst will be surrounded by scopes.
He will have to be a walking library of retrieval languages. Inefficiency
will border on ineffectiveness.

6.   The COINS program already is under examination, with ASD (I)
assigned Executive Agent responsibilities under IRAC auspices. The
primary missing element in the current COINS situation is the lack
of a demand by analysts for the kind of assistance which a community
on-line intelligence system should provide. In part, this is because
the analytical methodologies which might cause the demand are in
scarcely more than rudimentary use in the Intelligence Community, and

acceptance is slow. An additional limitation is that COINS files are not always kept current and are difficult to get at through existing operating procedures. Question is being raised in some quarters as to whether the Intelligence Community should cut its losses in COINS (as such) and should get underway with a new study which would yield specifications of capability, costs, schedules, contractor candidates, and the like, and provide basis for determination as to whether and to what degree the Intelligence Community wants to proceed with an up-to-date community on-line intelligence system which would include CIA and State as well as DOD agencies.

7. There is a strong requirement to back off and scope this problem before individual elements of the Community become so heavily committed on a single course of action, or data handling system, that they cannot be persuaded or will be unable to move toward compatibility of systems.

8. A number of approaches are available -- alternatively or in combination -- to bring the situation under control and develop a coordinated Community-wide approach to the information handling problem.

    a. Assign the job to the USIB Intelligence Information Handling Committee. The IHC is not now staffed to cope with a problem of the magnitude already apparent, but it has a strong membership of upper middle-level representatives from the agencies and services, most of whom are in direct charge of information handling or communications in their parent organizations. The IHC is well thought of in the Community and the JCS Joint Staff, but the climate to date has been such as to limit it primarily to service as a forum for the exchange of information.

    b. Establish a special task force, employ a full-time chairman of established reputation, and either authorize him direct access to the DCI or make him immediately responsive to someone who has direct access to the DCI, such as the DDS&T or the D/DCI/IC.

    c. Establish an Information Handling Group as part of the IC Staff, contract for the services of a Group Chief with first-rate expertise in this field, and give him a high-powered staff. This would reflect direct DCI support and give emphasis to the Community aspects which demand attention.

d. Enter into a contract, cost of which would be sizeable, with an established firm competent in computer-based research. Some considerable period of "education" of the contract staff would be involved and the contractor would be apart from the intra-Community management circle.

e. Assign the task to an element of the Intelligence Community which has experience in the development and administration of major programs, and make provision for necessary contract assistance. The CIA/DDS&T, the Director, NSA, and the NRO all have experience in managing in-house/ contractor-supported programs as do the military services. Each of these has institutional imperatives, and objections might well be raised by some elements of the Community if the overall task is assigned to any single agency or department.

9. In my view, the essential elements of whatever approach you decide upon should meet the following criteria:

a. The project office should be part of the DCI management structure at a high enough level so that the head of the activity can deal directly with program managers.

b. The activity should be clearly Community-related and not focused primarily on the information handling needs of any particular agency.

c. Staffing of the activity should be drawn from all Community members. If the effort is to be successful, each organization must be made to feel it has a full opportunity to assist in shaping the results. To overcome bureaucratic objections, achievement of a "DCI and the Community" spirit will be of great importance.

d. The undertaking should be broad enough -- and clearly evident as broad enough -- to assure all concerned parties that it is not "intelligence in isolation" from operational, telecommunications, policy and planning realities -- including the needs of military field commands.

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e. The project leader should have this responsibility as his full-time assignment, and his staff, including Community representation, also should be devoted full-time to the project.

10. On balance, I recommend that you:

a. Appoint an Intelligence Information Project Officer, responsible to you through the Intelligence Community Staff. This project officer should be selected in consultation with the program managers and could come either from within the Intelligence Community, from another government agency, or from private industry. The important factor should be the individual competence and recognized stature of whoever is selected. The appointment should be a full-time one for at least one year, with a possibility of extension.

b. Provide for support of the project officer by a Steering Group including senior representation from CIA, ASD(I), NSA, DIA, the IC Staff, the JCS and the Defense Communications Agency. The critical factor here is to introduce the expertise and ability to cope effectively with all the ramifications of a complex situation much as DDS&T has done in its major projects.

c. Arrange with the program managers to provide personnel augmentation to the Intelligence Information Handling Committee Staff to cope with the workload which will be involved.

d. Authorize the project officer to employ contract research assistance, as appropriate, subject to guidance from the Steering Group, and your approval.

e. Direct the project officer to develop:

(1) A Community-wide information flow analysis, indicating the current situation and what the Community would like it to be, with appropriate recommendations to bring this latter about.

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(2)   A study documenting the current status
of efforts underway with respect to electronic
information display systems and their costs, and
recommending specifically how to funnel the present
diverse activities into a coherent system for the
benefit of the Intelligence Community and its con-
sumers as a whole -- both in and out of Washington.

(3)   An adequate coordination/management
arrangement which, upon approval of the recommenda-
tions called for in (2) above, will assure implementation
of a single coherent intelligence system which inter-
faces as appropriate with consumer systems (such as
the military command and control arrangements).

(4)   An overall plan for coping with information
handling problems which recognizes that even though
the "real-time" video exchange problem is of major
significance, it is still only part of a needed overall
Community plan for dealing effectively with the
inter-agency/inter-departmental flow and handling of
information.

11.   I further recommend that:

a.   Coincident with your decision to proceed with
this project, you advise the USIB and IRAC of your
personal commitment to the success of this effort, and
request that all intelligence organizations take appropriate
cognizance of the impact of this effort in their current or
future contracting and procurement actions until the effects
of the task force endeavors are evident. This will pose
problems because some time-sensitive procurement actions
must be dealt with expeditiously, and getting your project
effort underway will require a bit of time, but it is important
that the situation not be further complicated by additional
moves on the part of agencies currently involved in
developing new systems.

b.   You disucss the project personally with Dr. Hall
because of its impact on ASD (I) actions with respect to

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COINS, and invite his support to the effort you are getting underway on a unified approach to present activities and proposed initiatives.

Daniel O. Graham
Lieutenant General, USA
D/DCI/IC